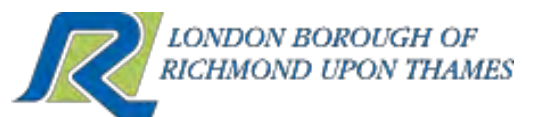




# Vine Road Recreation Ground Management Plan

January 2022 – December 2023



**Vine Road Recreation Ground Management Plan 2022-23: Foreword**

Vine Road Recreation Ground is an important space for local people and visitors. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames will maintain and manage the park to the highest standards in accordance with our strategic principles and policies.

This management plan is based on the use of an audit of the park following central government guidance known as PPG 17. This is explained within this document, but the approach is based on common sense. We believe that it is important to get the simple things right. Is the green space clean and tidy? Is the grass cut? Are the trees and shrubs well maintained? Is any graffiti removed effectively and quickly?

Working with local communities to deliver the highest quality of service is top priority and it is hoped that this document will provide a framework for continuing and improving dialogue. The site will be maintained appropriately, and the local community will be consulted on any proposed changes or improvements to facilities and infrastructure. In particular, the borough works closely with the Friends of Barnes Common (FoBC) who assist in the management of the site. We actively encourage suggestions about all aspects of the park. FoBC is actively engaged in preparing a proposed Master Plan for the park’s future (the ‘Vine Road Project’ or ‘Project’), based on the Council’s policies, while addressing community needs for lifelong wellbeing (mental and social), with implications not only for recreation but also lifelong learning and socialising, taking into account the full range of environmental needs. This plan will be subject to public consultation before the Council determines whether to adopt some or all of its proposals, some of which will then also be subject to planning consent.

Parks Officers, working closely with colleagues in Continental Landscapes and the Council’s other contractors using a partnership approach, regularly monitor the park. FoBC and Members of the local community are also encouraged to let us know their impressions about the level of maintenance as well as their ideas. It is hoped that the resulting observations and ideas will result in continually improving management and maintenance practises.

The current financial situation will inevitably have a detrimental effect on the resources available to improve and maintain the borough’s parks and open spaces. The borough will continue to work closely with its partners to maintain standards. In addition, we will need to look for additional ways of funding to maintain and improve the boroughs parks, one of our most valuable assets.

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**1. Introduction**

1.1 This Management Plan for Vine Road Rec provides guidance for the management and any relevant development of the park. It utilises the methodology outlined in the Government’s Planning Policy Guidance note 17 (PPG 17) in order to audit the state of provision of features and facilities on the site.

The Plan includes an Action Plan, which we aim to achieve within the remit of current budgets. The Plan has been drafted for a broad audience interested in the development of the park namely:

- The Friends of Barnes Common (FoBC) and borough residents;
- The Parks and Open Spaces Service;
- Other services and departments within the London Borough of Richmond;
- Elected members, ward councillors and portfolio holders;
- National agencies;
- Local businesses; and
- Partners and contractors

1.2 The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 2023. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2023.

**2. National Context**

2.1 Parks are managed areas of the green environment providing opportunities for a range of formal and informal leisure, passive and active sport, recreation and play.

2.2 The significance of parks, open space and countryside provision is clear:

- There are an estimated 27,000 public parks in Britain, visited an estimated 2.6bn times each year (Common Select Committee, 2016).
- There is an estimated 85,847 hectares of Publicly accessible green space in Great Britain, 73,400 in England. (*Natural capital accounts containing information about green spaces in urban areas*, Office for National Statistics, August 2019)
- 17.99% of Greater London is designated Public Open Space; with 3.5% Local Parks and Open Spaces & 5.2% Metropolitan Parks (GiGL, 2019).

2.3 It is widely recognised that the provision of high quality ‘public realm’ facilities such as parks can assist in making an area an attractive place to live and work, and can result in a number of benefits in terms of economic development, and regeneration, as well as physical and mental well-being. This has been highlighted during the pandemic and research is emerging around this.

2.4 The benefits of safe and accessible parks and open spaces can be summarised as:

**Social**

- providing safe outdoor areas for all members of the local population
- providing opportunities for community events, voluntary activities and charitable fund raising
- providing easily accessible recreation as an alternative to other more chargeable leisure pursuits

- providing opportunities to improve health and take part in a range of outdoor sports and activities
- providing an educational resource or outdoor classroom for lifelong outdoor learning, within the formal system as well as informally.
- Providing a place to cool off and relax during hot summer days
- Providing opportunities to engage, participate and even lead for CYP and all ages, and thus reduce risky behaviours and promote positive contributions to society

**Economic**

- adding value to surrounding property, both commercial and residential, thus increasing local tax revenues for public services
- contributing to attracting visitors, including using parks as venues for events
- encouraging tourism into the area
- helping to create an attractive local image
- helping to reduce social exclusion and its associated costs to society

**Environmental**

- providing habitats for wildlife as an aid to local biodiversity
- helping to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity
- absorbing pollutants in the air and ground water
- providing opportunities for the recycling of organic materials
- providing opportunities to reduce transport use through the provision of local facilities, and by providing walking and cycling routes through urban areas
- Promoting the ‘Slower’ ethos of sustainability, local, organic, working together, environmental and responsible.

**3. Relationship to Council Aims and Objectives**

The Council recognises that its parks and open spaces contribute to the:

- overall vision and priorities of the Council
- quality of life of local people
- physical, social and economic regeneration of the borough
- greening, attractiveness and biodiversity of the area

Accordingly, this Management Plan and the Parks and Open Spaces Service are guided by and are in agreement with the aims, objectives and principles of the following plans and strategies. These can be found at: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

**3.1 Richmond’s Community Plan 2016-2020**

The Community Plan describes the Council’s vision for the borough and outlines the steps that will be taken, through partnership working, to achieve this vision. The vision is for a borough where:

- Local people are engaged and involved in their communities.
- A vibrant and sustainable community and voluntary sector helps residents play a full role in community life.
- The local character of the environment is protected and development is high quality and compatible with local character.
- Our towns and local centres are attractive, viable for businesses and contribute positively to the quality of life of residents and visitors.
- People can live as independently as possible in the local community with good health and wellbeing.

For further details of the Community Plan please visit: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

### 3.2 **Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2011**

Our borough has the largest area of public open space per head of population of any London borough. We have a local and national reputation for quality and leadership in the delivery of excellent parks. To ensure the quality of our parks and open spaces remains at a high level, following public consultation, we developed a series of strategic principles by which the parks will be managed:

The strategic principles are as follows:

1. Parks and Open Spaces will be a sustainable legacy for future generations.
2. Parks and Open Spaces will continue to define our borough.
3. Parks and Open Spaces will enrich the life, health and wellbeing of residents and visitors.
4. The Council will lead in the delivery of excellent Parks and Open Spaces services.
5. Parks and Open Spaces will offer positive experiences to all visitors.
6. Through innovation, the future development of Parks and Open Spaces services will be ensured.
7. Increased community participation in Parks and Open Spaces will be encouraged and supported.
8. Parks and Open Spaces will be celebrated as centres of excellence.

### 3.3 **Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Richmond**

The main aims of the plan are:

- To conserve and where possible enhance Richmond's variety of habitats and species, in particular those which are of international or national importance, are in decline locally, are characteristic to Richmond or have particular public appeal, which can raise the profile of biodiversity
- To ensure that Richmond residents become aware of, and are given the opportunity to become involved in conserving and enhancing the biodiversity around them
- To raise awareness and increase stakeholder involvement in maintaining and where possible, enhancing species and habitats of importance

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found online here: [https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-Richmond\\_compressed.pdf](https://habitatsandheritage.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Biodiversity-Action-Plan-Richmond_compressed.pdf)

**3.4 Parks Improvements**

The Council have a commitment to continued improvement in our Parks and Open Spaces by improving existing infrastructure and developing and installing new facilities. The Council continues to have a cyclical investment programme to ensure that parks and playgrounds are up to standards, this includes £300k a year for park improvements and £150k for play. One aim of the management plan is to maintain the gains that we have achieved in previous years.

The Council list all major improvement projects on our webpage, which can be found here:

[https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks\\_and\\_open\\_spaces/parks\\_improvements\\_and\\_conservation/latest\\_parks\\_updates](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/parks_and_open_spaces/parks_improvements_and_conservation/latest_parks_updates)

**4 Site Description**

**4.1 Outline History**

The recreation ground as we know it began a century ago, when the Barnes Urban District Council purchased 5.5 acres for £3,850 from the executors of the estate of Walter Barker, the market gardener who owned the land, with the aim of providing a space for recreation. Initially there was no access from the western (Westfields) end.

Prior to the purchase, the original market gardens had been dissected by the arrival of the railways (1846 – 76), leaving this triangular site bounded to north-east and south by the railway lines, and to the west by the Beverley Brook.

In 1932, following negotiations with Joseph Pither of 68 Railway Side, a piece of his land 10’ x 55’ was purchased by the Recreation Ground for £100, with an agreement to erect a 6’ fence between the land and his remaining garden. This land provided the main pedestrian access from the west (Railway Side) that continues to this day.

Over the years there have been many additions: the main pavilion with changing rooms and a tea-room, a ‘keeper’s cottage’, paddling pool, playground, bowling green and bowling pavilion: the paddling pool and playground are very popular facilities, but bowling ceased over three decades ago and the bowling pavilion is largely used by a Montessori School for Early Years. Friends of Barnes Common has had its base on this site since 2013 and the pavilion, refurbished in 2018, is used by it as offices and a community space. One apple and one pear tree remain from the original market garden.



Panoramic View of the Recreation Ground

**4.2 General Information**

**4.2.1 Land Tenure**

The site is owned by the London Borough of Richmond and is managed by the Parks and Open Spaces Service.

The enabling acts which confer the specified powers to the Council to administer and maintain the land are listed below:

- Open Spaces Act 1906;
- Local Government Act 1972; and
- Local Government, Planning & Land Act 1980.

**4.2.2 Location**

Vine Road Rec is situated in Mortlake and Barnes Common Ward in the village of Barnes, in the east of Richmond-upon-Thames borough on the north-eastern boundary with Wandsworth (Putney), with postcode SW13 0NE.

It is bounded to the east by Vine Road, to the south by the Richmond branch railway line, to the north-east by the Hounslow loop railway line and to the west by the Beverley Brook.

**4.2.3 Access**

There are two entrances – the main one being at the eastern end from Vine Road between the two level crossings. The second is from the west and is suitable only for pedestrians and cyclists.

The park is a free and open facility with gates unlocked ‘dawn to dusk’ and fully inclusive access to local residents and visitors to the area.



**4.2.4 Local Transport**

**Train:** Barnes rail station is a 6 minute (0.3 mile) walk from the Vine Road entrance by footpath across Barnes Common.

The station is on the main line from London Waterloo to Richmond in Travel card Zone 3 as well as serving the Hounslow Loop. The station is typically served by twelve South Western Railway services each hour, with additional services at peak times.

The site is also accessible on foot from Barnes Bridge station (Hounslow Loop) about 8 minutes' walk away from the Westfields entrance.

**Bus:** There are bus services from Richmond, Putney, Putney Bridge, Roehampton and Tooting, all of which have stops within six minutes' walk of the park with local bus stops on the Upper Richmond Road (South Circular), Rocks Lane (at Barnes Station) and at Station Road (Barnes village). Hammersmith is also served when the bridge is open.

**London Underground:** The nearest London underground services are Putney Bridge, Putney East (District), and Richmond. Hammersmith provided the best links until the bridge was closed.

**Cycle:** National Cycle route 4 includes Vine Road, linking Richmond Park with central London. Vine Road also provides a popular local route to Richmond Park, linking with the dedicated cycle track along Priory Lane, and is particularly busy at weekends.

**4.2.5 Landscape & Topography**

The park's landscape is level, very open and mostly amenity grassland with trees along the boundaries. A tarmac path around the perimeter links the entrances and the play areas.

**4.2.6 Listed Historic Buildings**

There are no Listed buildings within the park.

**4.2.7 Ecology**

Mostly amenity greenspace, the site's interest is mainly in the maturing trees. Community Growing is playing an increasing role in the biodiversity of the park. There is potential for considerable improvement to the Beverley brook margin zone, as well as creating more topography and interesting planting schemes, all of which are to be included within the Vine Road Project.

Vine Road Recreation Ground lies within the Barnes Common Conservation Area.

**4.2.8 Facilities**

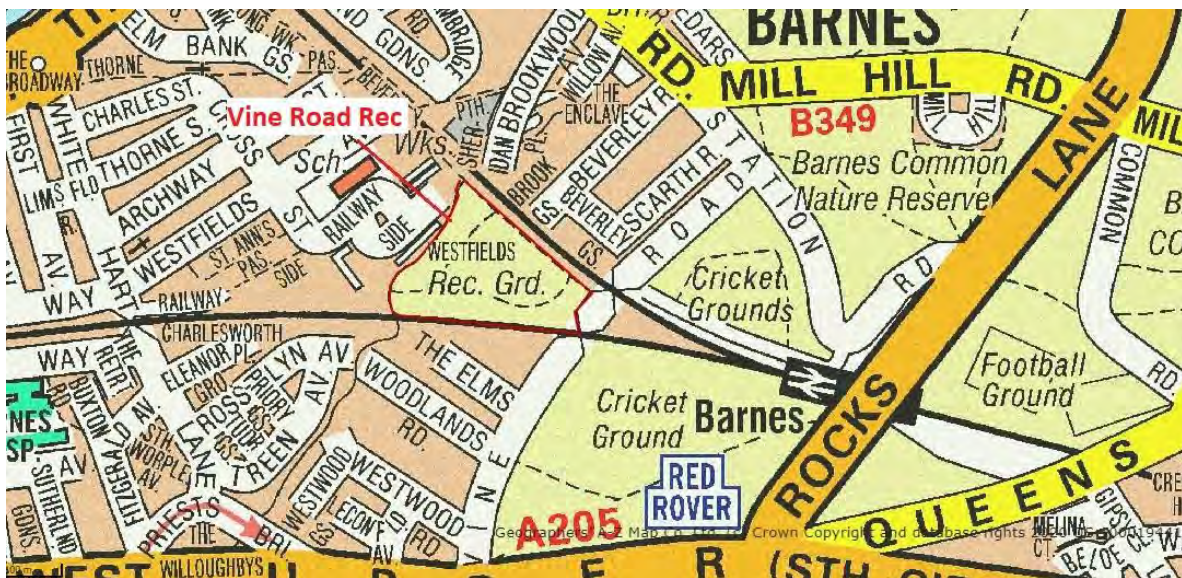
Vine Road Rec contains the following facilities:

- Two children's play areas equipped and maintained in accordance to ROSPA guidelines. One is enclosed and one is natural play area
- Paddling pool

- Toilet facilities (Male, Female & Disabled)
- Community growing and education space
- Pavilion (FoBC offices and community space)
- Second pavilion Early Years nursery school and FoBC office
- A polytunnel associated with the Community Growing project.

#### 4.2.9 Maps and Plans

Map 1: Location map of Vine Road Rec



Map 2: Plan map of Vine Road Rec



Map 3: aerial photo of Vine Road Rec



**5. Audit of facilities**

**5.1 The main reasons for undertaking a Local Assessment are:**

- to plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to ensure, as much as possible, that there are appropriate types of parks and open spaces required;
- to work towards ensuring an adequate provision of high quality, accessible green space to meet the needs of the community;
- to identify the gap between current and desired levels of need and demand, quality and quantity of provision;
- To assist in achieving standards such as the Green Flag Award and London in Bloom.

**5.2. Desirable Outcomes of the Local Assessment**

A local assessment of green space will enable planning to be effective and achieve key outcomes required by National Planning Policy Framework

These are:

- provision of accessible, high quality park space for sport and recreation that meet the identified needs of residents and visitors;
- provision of a park that is ‘fit for purpose’ – the right type in the right place;
- to provide an appropriate balance between new provision and enhancement of existing provision;
- Setting locally derived provision standards.

5.2.1 It is intended that this management plan helps to achieve these outcomes in terms of providing an analysis of existing provision and a plan to effectively maintain and, where appropriate, develop the facilities and infrastructure.

5.2.2 In addition, it produces a series of actions which will help to achieve the standards laid down for Green Flag Award parks:

- A welcoming place;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Well-maintained and clean;
- Environmental management;
- Biodiversity, landscape and heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing and communication; and
- Management.

5.3 **Methodology**

The methodology used was prescribed in the Government’s Planning Policy Guideline note 17 (PPG17) for the provision of public open space. This consisted of a review of the following key areas of provision:

- Main entrance;
- Boundaries;
- Roads, paths, cycleways and access;
- Parking;
- Information available;
- Planted areas;
- Grass areas;
- Cleanliness;
- Provision of litter bins;
- Seating;
- Children’s play space;
- Buildings including toilets;
- Health and safety;
- Nature conservation value; and
- Access for people with disabilities.

### 5.3.1 **Main Entrance**

The south-eastern entrance to the site, from Vine Road is the main entrance to the recreation ground. Here there is a double gate and small free carpark area. There is a large interpretation board as you leave the carpark and enter the recreation ground. Close to the main entrance is the pavilion and toilets. There is a second pedestrian entrance in the north-west of the park.

### 5.3.2 **Boundaries**

The recreation ground is sandwiched between two Network Rail train lines that run to and from London Waterloo. These are to the south and north east of the park. The boundaries to the train lines are marked with chainlink fencing. To the south east of the rec is Vine Road, marked with a metal railings fence, and the Beverley Brook flows along the remaining (western) perimeter of the recreation ground marked by more chainlink fencing.

### 5.3.3 **Roads, Paths, Cycleways and Access**

The main tarmac perimeter path connects the entrances and links in the formal playground. The paths are used by pedestrians and cyclists. The section along the southern boundary is wider to accommodate service vehicles.

### 5.3.4 **Parking**

There is a small carpark at the main entrance to Vine Road Recreation Ground which is free of charge.

### 5.3.5 **Gate Locking:**

The park is locked during the hours of darkness and details are displayed on site via posters. There is further information on our [website](#).

### 5.3.6 **Information**

Information relating to Vine Road Rec is available on the parks section of the Richmond Council website: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

The parks signage is attractive and durable giving appropriate contact details. It uses easily understandable symbols to deter users from inappropriate and anti-social behaviour.

### 5.3.7 **Cleanliness**

Litter and dog fouling are not frequent problems on the site.

### 5.3.8 **Planted Areas**

There is one planted rose bed of approximately 20m<sup>2</sup>; two planters with seating have been introduced, one around a cordyline tree and the other replacing a former heather bed. There is a shrub border along the north-easterly edge of the bowling green (90m<sup>2</sup>), and a hedges (total approx. 110m) separating the bowling green from

the remainder of the site. An annual flower meadow of approximately 100m2, seeded in 2013, is being allowed to naturalise.

The Community Growing Project manages a number of raised beds, planters and a polytunnel as well as other food growing beds, composting bins, water harvesting, wormery and related items.

**5.3.9 Scenic Quality**

The existing mature landscape offers reasonable landscape value and this is recognised in its inclusion within the Barnes Common Conservation Area.

The Vine Road Project considers that there are underutilised assets associated with the site, not least opening up to the Beverley Brook and re-working its margin (providing incremental flood storage capacity, material for topography within the site and improved biodiversity – all in keeping with policies to improve the Beverley brook catchment area and address flood resilience) as well as adding tree and/or orchard planting within the site and other ideas for waterwise planting. Landscape architects have been engaged to help draw up proposals for further consideration within the Vine Road Project.

**5.3.10 Grass Areas**

Most of the area is amenity grassland which is in fairly good condition. Some holes and bare areas need attention, especially one area prone to frequent puddling, albeit providing rainwater attenuation. The grass is used for informal ball games and in the summer the grass is marked out as a temporary running track for school use.

The former bowling green is no longer maintained, and provides a fine-grassed area popular for children’s play as well as for dog exercising, although this has led to wear and tear and frequent digging of holes especially during periods of lockdown due to Covid-19.

**5.3.11 Provision of Litter Bins**

Provision of litter bins is sufficient and in key areas at entrances, along the main perimeter paths and within the play area. Stickers have been placed on bins to encourage park users to take their litter home if full and to report any full or overflowing bin.

Dog waste can now be disposed of in normal litter bins and these bins are emptied daily by the Council’s street cleansing contractor.

**5.3.12 Seating**

There are nine benches in the park, within the playground area and around the perimeter path. This includes two ‘picnic’ areas.

Additional seating is provided by a seat/planter around the cordyline tree, the seat/planter which replaced the heather bed, and three further picnic tables serving the public and the pop-up café. The Vine Road Project will address the community desire for more shaded seating in quieter areas. The pop-up café (operating since

August 2020) provides additional outdoor seating in fine weather (when permitted by distancing regulations). Seating inside and outside the café will be further addressed within the Vine Road Project. As well as formal seating, the Project is considering possibilities for large logs to provide more casual natural seating within the more natural areas of the park.

**5.3.13 Children’s Play Space**

The formal playground is in good condition and has appropriate signage. There is also a paddling pool on site which is very popular and well used.

Outside of the playground are several natural play items which are similarly in a good condition. All play is maintained in line with ROSPA guidelines and inspected by our play maintenance contractor.

Within the Vine Road Project consideration is being given to re-location of early years play closer to the facilities (toilets and café), as well as an enlarged adventure play area and provision of a new ‘pump track/skateboard facility’ for informal wheeled sports, to provide encouragement of exercise by a wider age range and more engagement by non-participating groups. Public Consultation will establish demand levels for any changes, as well as possibilities such as outdoor gym equipment and exercise equipment for adults/seniors.

The Vine Road Project will propose alternative forms for water play which will use less water, recycle and filter/treat to maintain water quality. Ideas under consideration are a rock garden with streams and small pools fed by ‘on demand’ pumps aimed at early years but with year-round appeal as a garden; and a splash pad zone with fountains/sprays that blends with the landscape, can be switched on in hot weather when there is demand to cool off, but which remains attractive and can be used for skate boarding or other purposes at other times.

The Project will also look to provide topography which encourages play and possibilities for ‘performance’ or family/party gatherings, such as with small amphitheatres, which may also serve as outdoor classrooms.

**5.3.14 Buildings, including toilets**

Public toilets are provided in the main pavilion (with external access) near the main entrance with facilities for male, female and disabled users. The Ladies and Gents were refurbished in 2018 and further improvements for the Ladies were undertaken in 2021.

The main pavilion (refurbished 2018) is used as offices and for meetings by FoBC, for changing and storage by the Barnes Common Cricket Club, and is normally available for short term community hires. During the pandemic these uses have been curtailed, and the opportunity has been taken to test the concept of a café with a simple pop-up – initially intended to last no more than four to six weeks, this has proved so popular (and viable) that it ran continuously until October 2021. Arrangements have since been made with Feel Good Bakery (a part of the regenerate Charity) to operate one of their coffee cart operations – initially Thursday through Sunday but hopefully, subject to staffing, seven days a week once the



weather gets better. The pop-up has proved very popular and has made the case for a permanent community café as part of the Project recommendations,

There is also a Montessori Nursery (Early Years school) on site using most of the Bowling pavilion building and the smaller wooden shed as its Office..

The maintenance of all facilities is carried out by the Council's Facilities Management team.

The FoBC community growing projects utilise the larger old wooden shed as a potting shed and for storage; there is also a polytunnel which is used for educational and community purposes.

The former park-keeper's cottage and curtilage is currently part of the RHA estate so is not regarded as being part of this site, although it will eventually revert to Parks once no longer tenanted.

**5.3.15 Health and Safety**

The paths and the playground are in good condition and present no obvious dangers to members of the public.

**5.3.16 Nature Conservation Value**

Although the majority of the site is currently mown amenity grassland, the flower and growing beds and borders provide habitat for pollinators while the mature trees support invertebrates as well as birds and bats, especially along the green corridors of the railway lines and the brook. The absence of lighting after dark is of considerable nature conservation value, especially for bat feeding lines near the brook.

It is noted that numerous frogs are found where longer grass habitat is left, particularly within the enclosed raised bed growing areas where dogs are not permitted. Birds spotted include song thrush, mistle thrush, starlings, grey wagtail and heron, as well as nesting tits and blackbird.

There is scope to further improve nature conservation value through planting of more native trees (possibly including black poplar from locally rare clones) and replacement of non-native trees such as robinia (which supports a limited range of invertebrates), adding more orchard/fruiting trees and shrubs, opening up the brook and naturalising the brook margin, rainwater harvesting and water-wise planting of swales as part of SUDS schemes as well as seeding with more flowering species and adding more shrubs to the border areas. This is being addressed as part of the Vine Road Project which is also addressing climate and flood resilience.



Children on an outdoor learning exercise

**5.3.17 Access for people with disabilities**

The tarmac paths are in satisfactory condition and width for those with mobility difficulties. Consideration to design is given to ensure that most play is accessible to all. The pavilion has ramped access, as do the Ladies and Disabled toilets.

**6. Vision and Objectives for the park**

**6.1 Vision for Vine Road Recreation Ground**

In line with the wishes of the local community, voiced through the Friends of Barnes Common and its Vine Road Project Working Group, the future vision for the park is:

To be an example of a multi-use local park fit for the present century of which the local community and the borough are proud, playing a positive role for local users and the environment through provision not only of recreational facilities for early years but for all ages, including young people and adults; a community 'social hub' aimed at socializing both outdoors and indoors; lifelong outdoor learning opportunities, and a chance to engage with, participate in and lead a range of activities on this and other open spaces nearby

**6.2 Aims and Objectives for Vine Road Rec.**

- To keep the park as good as it can be, somewhere we can be proud of that meets the needs of all of the community – a source of wellbeing, addressing needs for mental as well as physical health,
- To achieve improvements to the play facilities adding more adventure play for young people, a pump track for informal wheeled sport, water play facilities for early years as well as young people and families (splash pad or similar). To

provide a centre for lifelong outdoor learning – both within the formal curriculum and informally, and incorporating both a virtual and physical information centre for Lowland Acid Grassland, broadleaf woodland and wetland habitats associated with Barnes Common as well as more generally for the environment, ecology, biodiversity and resilience to climate change and flooding.

- To encourage wider community engagement in food growing associated with a community café serving the park and neighbourhood.
- To create improvements for biodiversity and be a centre for conservation and environmental concern, in keeping with the ‘Slower’ ethos (sustainable, local, organic, working together, environmental and responsible (respecting nature, recycling, re-using ...))
- To work in partnership with the Council as an example of best practice for community 3<sup>rd</sup> sector project promotion, as well as providing a ‘beacon’ for outdoor learning and community engagement, including opportunities for volunteering, work experience, training and outreach.

**7. Management of the park**

**7.1 Introduction**

This section sets out guidelines and general principles to be followed in delivering the vision and objectives outlined above.

**7.1.1 The Council’s Parks and Open Spaces Service**

The Parks Service is overseen by the Head of Culture, assisted by the Parks Service Manager. It is made up of three teams:

- The Operations team is responsible for liaising with contractors and monitoring the parks. The team includes a parks operations manager, a parks officer, an ecology officer and a support officer.
- The Development team which is responsible for consultation and the planning and initiation of projects. The team consists of a group of local expert consultants coordinated by the Service Manager and assisted by the parks officer.
- The Arboricultural team is responsible for all street trees and arboricultural work in council-managed parks and open spaces, as well as assisting with planning issues. The team consists of a manager, four tree officers and a support officer.

We value diversity and are committed to delivering a service that puts equality of opportunity as a priority.

Management of the park needs to deliver high standards of maintenance of all aspects of the soft and hard landscaping of the park within existing revenue budgets. Developments have been funded by major borough-wide capital investment Parks Improvement Programmes between 2005 and 2010 and between 2012 and 2018.

The Vine Road Project has received funding for the first phase of Master Plan design and public consultations from the Richmond Community Fund as well as from a Community crowd-funding (140 individual donors) with matched pledge of funding from the London Mayor’s Fund.

7.1.2 Delivery Partners

The Council works in partnership and consults with the Friends of Barnes Common, which is based within the recreation ground. This assists the Council to work in harmony with users’ and residents’ views and ensure direct local input into the management of the park.

For parks maintenance, a new Framework approach was introduced from April 2013, with services split into separate lots. The current contract started in February 2018 and is split into seven lots. In broad terms maintenance will be carried out by the contractors’ operatives who are specialist in the relevant areas, thus achieving high and consistent standards. It was extended for another four years in 2021. As a framework, the contracts will also be available for other authorities and organisations in London and the south-east of England.

**Parks Framework contract: February 2018 – February 2021 (renewed March 2021 – 2025)**

Following an open and thorough procurement process that began in spring 2017, contractors were appointed to seven service areas to start 36 month contracts in February 2018 (now renewed to 2025). Evaluation was on an 80% cost and 20% quality basis.

- 1 Amenity Landscape Management
- 2 Arboriculture Management
- 3 Oak Processionary Moth management
- 4 Play Inspection & Maintenance
- 5 Parks Patrol
- 6 Events Management
- 7 External Planting

Procurement was written in an output style with built-in quality measures and performance indicators, and qualifying contractors to design excellent services using their knowledge and experience.

In 2013 invitations were issued to Friends groups and other organisations interested to work in partnership with the Council on whole site management as 3<sup>rd</sup>-sector providers. This resulted in three organisations being selected with special remits: Barn Elms Sports Trust (for the Barn Elms sports fields); one for the built environment and FoBC for conservation and general management of Barnes Common (and elements of Vine Road Rec management as it is based there). FoBC’s partnership arrangement has been extended in line with the framework contracts, (and FoBC has been awarded a further conservation management contract covering the Leg o’ Mutton reservoir and with a Woodland Conservation Management contract for its sites).

Relevance to Vine Road Recreation Ground

Continental Landscapes is the main grounds contractor, undertaking amenity management (grass cutting, shrubs, hedges, sports bookings and pitch maintenance), small works (hard landscaping, infrastructure and furniture installation, etc.) gate locking operations, plus undertaking play inspection and maintenance. They also undertake parks cleansing (including public toilet cleansing and maintenance) alongside existing street cleansing and graffiti removal to create a joined-up operation.

KPS is the arboricultural contractor, working closely with the Council’s tree team who undertake inspections and specify works, with Bartlett Tree Experts undertaking Oak Processionary Moth management. FoBC’s woodland conservation management includes consultation on tree management within the recreation ground.

Events in parks are managed by The Event Umbrella, a company who specialise in managing outdoor events in the public sector.

Park patrols are undertaken by Parkguard, a company specialising in education, support services and enforcement in parks and open spaces.

**7.2 A Welcoming Place**

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that Vine Road Rec continues to be a welcoming area.

**7.2.1 Graffiti removal**

As a part of our aim to make the Borough safe, green and clean we are committed to reducing and removing graffiti. The full details of the borough’s commitment to the prompt removal of graffiti can be viewed at: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

There is an agreement with the Council’s street cleansing contractor, Continental Landscapes Ltd, to manage the removal of all graffiti within five working days. Where the graffiti is offensive it will be removed within one working day of notification.

FoBC deals with minor graffiti and reports major cases to the contractor.

**7.2.2 Signage**

Signage is kept clean and is regularly inspected. Any necessary repairs will be carried out promptly.

**7.2.3 Pathways**

All paths are inspected annually with defect monitoring throughout the year. Any necessary repairs will be carried out as promptly as possible.

**7.3 Healthy, Safe and Secure**

The following management regimes all play a part in ensuring that the park continues to be a healthy, safe and secure place.

**7.3.1 Community Safety**

All contractors working in the park undertake an important role in terms of a visible staff presence and structure their maintenance work accordingly. All contractors are uniformed and wear highly visible clothing.

FoBC staff are often on site and many are uniformed, providing a further presence and point of reference for park users; with increased numbers they will now be on site most weekdays. FoBC organises a pop-up café . Opening hours and days vary by season but it is open at weekends year round. It has helped provide a

highly valuable presence and focus for park users to report any concerns. Volunteers involved with the community growing project have a regular presence at weekends, evenings, holiday periods, and at varied times throughout the normal working week. They are active ambassadors for engaging with the wider community.

Parkguard regularly patrol the park. In addition the local Police Safer Neighbourhood team regularly visits the park.

The park is currently included in a Public Spaces Protection Order designed to reduce anti-social behavior in public places in the borough, effectively replacing the open space byelaws. For example, barbeques, fires and fireworks are prohibited; bicycles must not cause a hazard, nuisance or damage; drones are prohibited; and smoking is prohibited in any enclosed play or sports area. More details can be found on the Council’s website.

**7.3.2 Dogs**

The Council and their contractors make efforts to educate dog owners to be responsible for their dogs and especially dog waste as the dangers of humans coming into contact with dog faeces are well known and the site is intended for children’s play. Dogs are allowed off lead and the Rec is popular with dog walkers as it is well fenced and relatively safe. The social interaction of dog walkers is also important to their wellbeing.

Signage clearly indicates that dog mess should be picked up and disposed of by those walking their pets. All general waste bins can be used to dispose of dog waste.

The Council has a Public Spaces Protection Order in place to regulate dog control. With regard to Vine Road Rec these prohibit fouling, limit an individual to walking a maximum of four dogs (unless in possession of a licence or permit issued separately) and require dog walkers to ensure their dog is under proper control at all times.

The children’s playground / paddling pool area and the community growing areas are fenced and gated to prevent dog access. All buildings are dog-free (except for guide dogs).

**7.4 Clean and well maintained**

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is clean well maintained:

**7.4.1 Horticulture**

Grass surfaces within the park are classed as amenity grass.

Amenity turf is those areas used for general recreation and formal and informal sports and can include wide-open spaces or those areas planted with trees and shrubs. The height of this grass is kept between 20 and 60mm throughout the year with adjustments when prepared for sports use.

The level of maintenance will depend on the level of use, with increased repairs, fertilising, and scarifying of those areas subject to heavy wear. Most repair works to turf are carried out in the autumn or spring, with areas either re-turfed or seeded.

Grass edges, whether they are against paths, fences or walls will be cut at the same time as the rest of the grass using strimmers in most areas.

Grass in areas fenced off for community growing are maintained by the community and FoBC staff.

**7.4.2 Trees**

Trees within parks are subject to inspection by suitably qualified and experienced arboriculturists in order to identify and remedy any unacceptable risks to people using the sites. An example of this is the prophylactic treatment of oak processionary moth or the removal of trees that are extensively decayed compromising their structural integrity.

Tree pruning is only carried out where necessary for risk management purposes or where formative pruning is necessary; this approach allows Richmond’s parks to retain a natural landscape with well-formed specimens. Where there is a particular characteristic by way of species composition, size or natural distribution the Council seeks to maintain this through selecting appropriate replacement and new trees. All tree works are in accordance with our Tree Management Policy

Richmond Council encourages the Friends of Barnes Common to consider the tree population within parks and to communicate with the Parks and Open Spaces team in order to make improvements and ensure that there is continuity in the way that the trees are managed.

Within Vine Road every attempt is being made to prolong the life of the apple and pear trees which survive for the site’s former use for market gardening. Community harvesting and use of fruit is undertaken when possible, and additional fruiting orchard trees have been and will be planted.

Some of the boundary trees (including Lombardy poplar and silver birch) are approaching end of life and safety is a major concern due to proximity with the railway lines. Non-native trees such as robinia will in time be replaced with more native species and it is hoped that within the Project re-landscaping there will be further planting opportunities for rarer native trees, as well as trees and shrubs which are good for boundary screening, nature conservation and biodiversity.

**7.4.3 Cleansing**

The collection of litter is extremely important in maintaining the appearance of the park and has a direct effect upon how people treat and respect the site. Litter is collected on a daily basis by the park cleansing contractors.

The contractors carry out litter picking, emptying of litterbins and the sweeping / blowing of paths. This applies to all surfaces, paths, lawns and beds. Some litter picking is undertaken by the Montessori school staff and children, as well as by the popup café staff and other volunteers.

When the park has high numbers of visitors, and large amounts of litter are expected, the cleansing contractors will carry out additional visits to empty the bins and /or increase bin capacity with temporary ‘events’ wheelie bins. The full litter bags will be collected and removed from the site on the same day. In addition, the bins are cleaned and disinfected quarterly to avoid an unsightly accumulation of dirt.

**7.4.4 Park Furniture and Fittings**

The grounds contractors ensure that all furniture is clean and will check benches, notice boards and bins on a regular basis. Items will be cleaned as needed. Repairs will be requested by contractors on a Defect Report and carried out promptly. Any single replacement or repair will match the existing furniture, so that the style of the seat remains consistent.

The playground equipment is inspected once a week by the contractor and any hazards identified are dealt with accordingly. In addition, there is an annual inspection to ensure that the playground meets ROSPA standards.

**7.4.5 Hard Surfaces**

Hard surfaces will be kept clean, with litter swept from surfaces regularly by the grounds maintenance team.

Hard surfaces will be maintained in a weed free state (with spot treatment weed spraying only where absolutely needed between March and November). Paths will be kept in a good state of repair, all paths being inspected annually and any repairs ordered to be carried out between March and November.

Drains and gulleys will be inspected regularly by staff and contractors on site.

**7.5 Environmental Sustainability**

The following regimes are designed to ensure that the park is managed in a sustainable way:

**7.5.1 Recycling green waste**

The Council's ground maintenance contractor takes all green waste to Townmead recycling centre.

FoBC ensures appropriate green waste from the growing project is composted and re-used on site and that other green waste is removed from site to Townmead.

**7.5.2 Pesticides and herbicides**

The use of pesticides is minimised as much as possible in the interests of nature conservation and ecology. An Integrated Weed Management policy has been developed to assist decision-making.

**7.5.3 Biodiversity**

The Friends of Barnes Common, the Parks team and contractors are working together to diversify this amenity greenspace for wildlife.

An annual wildflower meadow was created in 2013 and this is now being allowed to naturalise. A small hedge in poor condition was replanted as a fruiting hedge with species able to provide more pollen and fruits for wildlife. Community growing is not only encouraging food growing but also encouraging pollinator friendly planting and management.



We will work to the guidelines as set out in our Nature Conservation Policy Statement.

The landscaping proposals within the Project are intended to add significantly to biodiversity, both for the benefit of nature and as a teaching and learning resource, while the outdoor learning activities based on Vine Road will reduce pressure on and improve understanding of Barnes Common and other local open spaces.

**7.6 Community Involvement**

This is crucial to the management of the park. Engagement with the local community is carried out by working with the Friends, Habitats and Heritage and other organisations with which they collaborate.

The Friends of Barnes Common have already done much to engage in and promote the park through activities (growing, classes, courses, regular nature club for families, Art & Science holiday sessions, teacher training, volunteering), social events (Wassail) and public consultations. The number of Friends in the organisation has grown from under 300 at March 2020 to over 950 at January 2022, and much of this increase has been Vine Road users registering as friends. . A website has been created for Vine Road Project which also carries current information on the site.

The Community is at the heart of the Project, and the Council is highly supportive. Initial funding for development of the Master Plan and public consultations has been provided by the Richmond Community Fund. An initial ‘conceptual’ public consultation took place in November 2019 resulting in confirmation of council support. Although progress has been slowed by the pandemic, lead architects were appointed in December 2020 through public tender for design of a Master Plan to be used in public consultation, seeking Council approval and as a basis for applications for third party funding and Planning consent.

Funding was also successfully raised from the Community early in 2021, with 140 individuals donating, match funded by the London Mayor’s resilience fund, to support community engagement with the Project – through consultation events, a range of small scale improvements that have and will enhance the park in the near term, as well as help test elements of the Project, such as temporary ramps and a club for skateboarders, more planters, seating, tree planting etc. as well as spend on delivery of a Master Plan for the park, including a major public consultation and survey.

The Master Plan was submitted to the Council late in 2021, with amendments reflecting the public consultation, and a response will follow after due consideration.

**7.6.1 Parks Events**

The Council encourages the hire of parks to appropriate organisations. The Friends and ward councilors are consulted before permission is granted for any new event. An evaluation process is held after each event.

Events are held in accordance with the Parks and Open Spaces Events Policy found at: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk)

It is hoped that more community oriented open days, workshops and other events can be organised once lockdown and distancing regulations permit.

**7.7 Marketing**

Promotion and marketing of Vine Road Rec is carried out using a range of measures, including the Council’s website and publicity literature, to ensure that local people and visitors to the borough are aware of the facility.

**7.7.1 Entrance Signage**

A corporate style of signage for Richmond’s parks and open spaces was launched in 2007. It was designed to be attractive and informative.

The Vine Road Project architects are paying particular attention to creating a warm welcome to the park, based on layout, boundary fencing near and gates at entrances, layout of paths and features as well as signage.

**7.7.2 Internet**

Information about the park is available on the council’s website: [www.richmond.gov.uk](http://www.richmond.gov.uk).

Information on the Friends of Barnes Common can be found on their [webpage](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). They can also be contacted at [vineroadproject@barnescommon.org.uk](mailto:vineroadproject@barnescommon.org.uk) and <https://barnescommon.org.uk/>

**7.7.3 General Promotion**

In order to create community awareness for all of its facilities, the Parks and Open Spaces Service regularly produces articles and press releases about activities and facility development.

FoBC produces a monthly e-newsletter and at least two editions annually of ‘*On the Common*’, as well as regular updates to both its websites and an ever-increasing social media presence

**8. Achievements and Action Plan**

**8.1 Achievements**

Changes and improvements made at Vine Road Recreation Ground during 2020-22 were:

- Repairs to the paddling pool surface
- A Pop-up Café was set up in the pavilion in the summer 2020 and is now continuing year-round via a ‘coffee cart’ service.
- Community growing projects ongoing
- New seating near the entrance
- New planters (fixed, with seating, and movable)
- Draft Master Plan prepared, public consultations held, submitted to Council.

**8.2 Action Plan**

Item of work and location	Year		Timing	Resources
	2022	2023		
Vine Road Project	Y	Y	Ongoing	Friends Group & Parks Team,
Community Engagement (Crowd source and GLA funding)		Y	2021	Friends Group
Resume Learning / Events etc		Y	Once permitted	Friends Group

**8.2.1 Development and Renewal**

The Vine Road Project is driven by Friends of Barnes Common, based on its educational as well as conservation and community remit. No formal decision has yet been taken by the Council as site owners as well as local authority, and it is recognised that the Parks team are not generally envisaging major changes to park facilities across the borough, following an extended period of significant investment.

The major challenge for the Parks team and its contractors is to maintain high standards of maintenance and to plan effective repair and renewal of existing facilities. However, if a strong case is made for significant change, which will promote improvements across a wide range of the borough’s policies and which will command significant third party as well as community funding support, then this is open for discussion. Thus to date the Council has supported the development of the Vine Road Project by FoBC.

**8.2.2 Community Engagement**

The Parks team will continue to work with the Friends of Barnes Common. It is committed to being receptive to concerns and suggestions voiced individually as well as through community groups.

**8.3 Operational Commitments**

This is presented in tabular form and includes the most important elements of the day to day maintenance of a park, grass cutting, trees and shrubs, litter collection and maintenance of parks furniture. Monitoring and inspection duties are included. Biodiversity management and initiatives are also included in this section.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Grass Maintenance	Kept to a height of between 20mm & 60mm  Designated long grass areas are to be unmown and left long all year.	As required to maintain length; average 16-18 cuts per year
Tree maintenance	Inspection  Replanting	Every three years minimum  As necessary
Shrub Maintenance	Kept weed free  Mulching  Pruning	Monthly  Annual  As required, dependent on species
Litter collection	Collection and emptying	Daily
Cleansing	Cleaning of public toilets and drinking fountain	Daily
Graffiti	Removal of obscene/offensive  Removal of other	Within 24 hours  Within 5 working days
Parks furniture	Clean and paint  Repair/replace	When necessary  When necessary
Monitoring of contract	Monitoring	Every three months
Playground inspection	Visual inspection  Detailed inspection  ROSPA standard	Fortnightly as with ROSPA guidelines  Monthly  Annual
Infrastructure	Inspection  Clearance of paths	Annual  When necessary
Biodiversity opportunities and actions	Installing bulbs, shrubs, plants, deadwood piles, composting etc	Ongoing

**8.4 Conclusion**

This Management Plan is not ‘set in stone’. It provides a framework and guidelines that enable the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to manage the site to a high standard in a sustainable way. The Council is open to the changing needs of local communities and will continue to work closely with the Friends of Barnes Common. The Plan will run from January 2022 to December 23. An interim progress update will be undertaken in January 2023.